THE MYSTERY OF THE MORGUE.---By EDGAR SALTUS.

ARCHITECTURALLY speaking, New York, if beautiful, is beautiful only in spots. It has streets which are hideous and thoroughfares that even in the sorceries of spring seem dismal and mean, precincts that could appear attractive only to a lost aeronaut in an escaping balloon. Among these First avenue may readily take precedence. Made up of tall tenements and low rookeries, there is about it the odor of Whitechapel and St. Giles, mitigated, however, in the neighborhood of Twenty-sixth street by the clean smell of chloride of lime. It is there that Bellevue Hospital is situated. Within its walls, on a slope that leans to the river, is the Morgue, a squatty structure that, through some parody of construction, looks more like a life saving station than the home of death.

Within there is entire unloveliness; bare floors, sharp angles, domineering walls, a lack of beauty, unrelieved, which, to those who go there looking for some lost one whom they hope they will not find, must add another depression to the store which they have brought. From the very nature of the building you would not, of course, expect it to offer the enticements of a boudoir, and manifestly the seductions of the Waldorf would here be out of place. Nevertheless, though it be the hotel of the unknown dead, there is no imaginable reason why it should be made repellant to the living guest.

The name is suggestive of better things. Its synonyms are pride, amour-propre, arrogance, or, if you prefer, self-sufficiency.

The Morgue of the world, the one most famous in literature and legend, the Morgue of Paris, stand directly behind Notre Dame—not Victor Hugo's masterpiece, of course, but that jewel of twelfth century architecture which rises from an island in the Seine. It is a pavilion, the color of cream, which you enter through spacious doors and wide arcades. Beyond is a hall into which the sunlight, when there is any, may fall at will. At the further end, in rows of six, are twelve tables of black marble. On these the bodies are placed. Back of them are hooks for the clothing which the dead have worn, and over them, to arrest decomposition as long as possible, are sprays of running water. It is not, assuredly, a place in which you would elect to pass more time than the law allows, but in appearance and arrangement, barring the spectacle of the dead, there is nothing to distress, and as you go from it, there, for your entertainment, perhaps for your instruction, too, is the girdle of fabulous birds and beasts that circle through the balconies and around the towers of the Cathedral of Our Lady. Among them are great, yawning vultures, their stone wings drooping wearily; there are griffons with false and sleepy eyes; deer with human breasts and hands, rams with the arms of wrestlers, but which terminate in crooked claws; two-headed hounds, and with them a guard of angry demons. What their significance may be concerns the iconograph; but as you watch them lean and gaze at the Morgue beneath, at all the great, outlying city, too, the idea will come that when, hundreds of years ago, they were posted there, it was as sentinels, whose duty it should be to mark across the ages the samelessness of the griefs and joys of man. What else but monsters could be compelled to do that?

On issuing from the Morgue on Twenty-sixth street and First avenue you may encounter monsters also. Unfortunately they are not of stone, and their significance concerns not the iconograph, but the police. They are the local scum, bloated, blear-eyed, yet brutal, and more animal, in that they live, than the rams with the crooked claws.

Within, too, the difference is as marked. To see the dead you must first have a wrangle with their guardian; then, if you happen to be victorious, he pulls them out through the little doors of a big refrigerator on slabs, and the moment he feels like it slams them back. The clothing is kept in cubby-holes in an adjoining room, and when required for inspection is tossed out on the floor.

Such at least was the experience of the writer in a visit which he made there last week. The inciting cause of that visit was the wish to see the woman who committed suicide at the Colonnade Hotel. In girlhood she may have been gentle and good, but in death there was in her face and about her mouth an expression of absolute spite, as though she had killed herself angrily, defiantly, as a posthumous revenge on those who had not loved her enough, on those perhaps who had not loved her at all; as though she had sought to protest with her life against some iniquity of others or of her own, against something for which she was not responsible; as though she had been forced to die against her will by some one of those remote and mysterious influences which we call heredity.

It was not an alluring expression, and in the garments which she had worn there was little allurement, either—wretched lace-frilled, blood-stained things of which one, a ruby jacket with yellow buttons, was of such vulgarity that the writer, who had not yet seen the body, could, at the moment, reach no other conclusion than that bad taste leads to crime.

For suicide is that. Under our local laws its attempt is catalogued as a misdemeanor. Theft, on the one hand, is a felony, and what is suicide but a theft from the human race? A theft, indeed, more often condoned than reproved, but none the less a theft.

In earlier days and in other lands the right to take one's life has been as unquestioned as the right to dispose of property. Among the Hindoos those attacked by a painful or incurable disease threw themselves in the Ganges. And there used to be in India an instrument for public use with which any one could cut off his head. It was in the shape of a half moon, it had a sharp edge, with stirrups at the extremities. In these you could put your feet, lean your neck against the edge, give a pull, and, behold, you were decapitated.

Among the Buddhists, throughout China and Japan, suicide was committed on the slightest provocation. An insult, a trivial affront, was frequently followed by the death, not of the offender, but of the offended, who performed hara-kiri on himself and entered Nirvana by a short cut, leaving but shame to his aggressor.

Of the great men of classical antiquity the majority died by their own hands. There was barely a Roman of note but kept by him a slave who should kill him when his hour had come. In Greece suicide was a dogma to the stoics. Zeno, the founder of the school, killed himself; his successor, Cianthes, followed suit. The teachings of Epicurus and of the Epicureans were direct invitations to death. Later, tribunals were instituted for the hearing of the applications of those who wished to die. If the petitioner showed reasonable cause, the request was granted; he killed himself with the sanction of the court; in some cases even the court supplied the means—a decoction of hemlock. If any one applied for permission and was refused and committed suicide without it, in Greece his memory was dishonored, in Rome, his property escheated to the state.

In the Institutes and Digest of Justinian,

In the Orient manners and customs today are but little different from what they were ages ago. In our breezier Occident civilization has routed so many nightmares that suicide, from being an ordinary event, has become exceptional, something abnormal to the average mind, an act indicative of insanity, or cowardice, and usually both.

As for cowardice, Mme. de Stael, whose graces, as Byron courteously puts it, were not those of the person, referred to a suicide as one who had conquered even the fear of death. And, as for insanity, scientists are agreed that the suicidal impulse is as distinct from it as epilepsy is from imbecility. Lord Clive is a case in point. As a young man he twice tried to kill himself. Later, as you are aware, he conquered India. In his fiftieth year he shot himself dead. Never was his sanity doubted. The case of Boulanger is another. The case of Reinach's a third. You may multiply these at will.

Insanity is quite of a different order. A good example is Hobbs, a sober, steady workman, who after appearing out of sorts for a week or more, suddenly shouted: "I'll cut my throat," and seized a knife. His wife knocked it from his hand, whereupon he tore eight teeth from his jaws, tried to tear out his tongue, and then threw himself head first into a tank. Rescued, it took six men to hold him. Tied hand and foot, he was taken on the morrow to an asylum. There he was unbound and before his hands could be caught he had gouged both eyes from their sockets. That was not the suicidal impulse; it was mania.

THE THRONG OF VISITORS AT THE CITY MORGUE.

True suicide, as a rule, is little less than assassination driven in. The average man who wants to dies does so because others wont. When he happens to have another reason, it is, more often than not, because he really wants to live. What he does not want are the miseries attendant on his own particular existence. Abolish them and he will swear by Methuselah. Such suicides are optimists.

But there is another class, one which occurred to the writer as he looked at that face in the Morgue. Precisely as there are men and women too, who must write verse, whom the Muse haunts whose thoughts she entangles, whose steps she detains until her will is done and the poem as well, so are there individuals whom crime commands, to whom it is a torturesome obsession, of which they may rid themselves only by committing the act it inspires or by outwitting in with a bodkin, by felony or suicide.

With that class in his mind and that dead woman before him, the writer was reminded of another suicide, a fair young woman, the wife of a famous local specialist in insanity, who eight or nine years ago killed her children and then herself, and who, as it afterward appeared, had felt the obsession growing on her, who had complained of it, fought against it, struggled with it, until outwearied in a combat more terrible, more intense and agonizing than any that playwright or novelist ever produced, was mastered by that obsession and the deed was done.

In the absence of another hypothesis, it occurred to the writer that that woman in the Morgue who called herself Mrs. Everett, and who had come, no one knew whence, and had killed herself, no one knew why, was perhaps a mother who had fled from her children, fled from her home, fearful lest an obsession, which she, too, felt lurking and growing in some cave of her heart, should so possess her that suddenly, without respite, it might compel her to kill her children before she could kill herself.

From the documents in the case—all of which have been too recently and fully recited to need repetition here—it is presumable that the woman came from an appreciable distance, it may be from England. The marks of foreign manufacturers on different articles which she had lend weight to the latter supposition. The shoes, for instance, which she wore, and which were quite new, were of English make. Then, too, her mode of speech differed from ours. Those with whom she came in contact at the Colonnade did not regard her as an American. In addition, she had a travelling rug, a convenience indispensable in Europe, but rarely, if ever, used here.

In view of these premises the conclusion that she came from abroad is not unreasonable. Assuming, then, that such a journey was taken, what was its object? Her clothing, if not in consonance with accepted canons of good taste, denoted at least that she was accustomed to certain elegancies, and preclude any idea that she could have come in search of employment. Moreover, she had in her possession money and jewelry which, if inappreciable in value, would still have sufficed, had she come in search of employment and failed at first to find it, to tide her along for a month and more.

But there are other reasons which make such a supposition untenable. Such marks and lettering on her effects as might have furnished a clew whence she came and who she was she had done her best to efface. Then, too, in the open note which she left behind the one wish expressed was that her body should be cremated.

Now, however conjectural the object of her journey may be, the precautions which she took, together with the instructions which she left, show, with tolerable charity, her entire understanding that with everything by means of which she might be traced removed, and every peculiarity of physical conformation charred to powder, her identity could never be discovered, unless, indeed, previous to cremation, she were recognized at the Morgue. But if, as assumed, she came from England, the chance of such recognition she nullified by the simple device of registering as from Boston. Manifestly, one Bostonian more or one Bostonian less is of slight importance across the sea. The suicide of an Englishwoman in New York would be promptly cabled to the London papers, but there is not one chance in a thousand that the suicide of an unknown American would be even copied from our local press.

All of which the woman who gave her name at the Colonnade as Mrs. Everett clearly understood, and understood, too, that even should that chance in a thousand go against her, and her death find mention abroad, even then it would be too late for purposes of identification.

In view, then, not alone of the precautions which she took, but of the circumstances attending them, the theory advanced by other writers that she came here in search of employment, theatrical or otherwise, and then killed herself because of failure to find it, is untenable, if for no better reason than that, were such the case, the desire to conceal her identity would not have preoccupied her as it did.

The one deducible presumption is that she came here not to seek work, but to avoid it, to get away from some obsession that was lurking and growing within her, that was battening on her brain, compelling and inciting her to some deed against which, with all the weakness of her strength, she recoiled; against a deed which in some paroxysm she may have threatened to perform, and implored, as other women have, for protection against her own self; or rather against that obscure and formless thing she knew not what, but which, in the silence of the night, would come to her, pluck her by the sleeve, wake her, sit by her side, incite her to nameless horrors and leave her, each time more quivering and defenceless than before, until, at last, gathering what strength remained, she fled and hid herself from life in death.

If such be the history of that woman, it is by no means unique. The annals of medical jurisprudence are replete with cases not dissimilar; so, too, are the aisles of the insane.

In a work of rare merit, a French thinker, Pierre Janet, has recently explored the tenebrous borderlands from which these obsessions come and has shown that the mind beneath its visible dwelling has many a cellar in which strange tenants prowl. Beneath the frontiers of the understanding are the lost lands of sub-consciousness, and it is there that memories which we have forgotten, influences that we know nothing of, impulses which we may never feel, watch and wait. Our individuality is dual. Half our being is unaware what the other half is about. In normal condition man is a bundle of ideas and sensations arranged in order and sequence. In certain crises of the emotions, in pathological conditions, provoked by causes as yet obscure, but which are more frequent in women than in men, the orderly arrangement of that bundle is disturbed, ideas and sensations twist awry, and then from the caves of our being influences and impulses troop out and take us unawares.

Surely it was one of those cave-dwellers that had sent the bullet crashing through that woman's brain. And as she lay on the slab, her black hair tossed in tangles, her features contracted, and in and about, the curves of her mouth an expression of deathless hate, it occurred to the writer that whatever had brought her where she lay, there was more romance, more real and poignant drama within the loveless walls of the Morgue than in all of Homer and Virgil, too.

EDGAR SALTUS.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TRIP IN THE JOURNAL'S FLYING MACHINE.

The Journal's flying machine continues to fly over Staten Island.

Experiments made during the last two weeks have demonstrated that it soars as well in the air as it does on paper, and that it is as much of a success practically as it is theoretically. The claims of Herr Otto Lilienthal, of Berlin, Germany, its inventor, have been fully substantiated.

Flying machines come and flying machines go every day or so, but the Journal's stays here right along and continues to be the only one in the United States that rises from the ground with a human being as a passenger.

The trials have shown that anybody can fly, provided he is equipped with wings of the right sort. They have also shown that Lilienthal was right when he suggested that there could be no better sport than flying. The Journal's experiment should encourage athletes to hold regattas in the air. Tobogganing on ice we can enjoy only for a few weeks in the year; tobogganing in the air is possible at all seasons. There could not be a more fascinating pastime, and it is many times less dangerous than football. Contests such as these would surely lead to improvements in the various devices for flying, and consequently hasten the solution of the problem of aerial navigation. They offer a rare field for the athlete and for the inventive geniuses of the country.

Several trials have recently been made with the Journal's machine, and they have all been very successful. The work has been delayed somewhat, on account of the wind, which, for a week or more, with the exception of a couple of days, has steadily blown from the west. The trials are made on the lawn facing the country residence of Mr. J. Harper Bunnell, on the summit of Toedt Hill, Staten Island. The lawn, which is in the shape of a mammoth hill that slopes off to the east, can only be used when the wind is from a point east of north or south, as flights of course can be made only directly against the wind. The greatest problem of the problems of man flight lies in finding a device that will sail with the wind. Every advantage was taken of the few days that afforded favorable conditions, and the results of the trials were astonishing.

A RECORD BREAKER.

It will be remembered that Mr. Harry B. Bodine, the New Jersey athlete who is operating the machine, accomplished on April 27, after only a few days' practice, a flight of seventy-five yards. This record was eclipsed last Thursday, when he soared 125 yards, effecting a landing without the slightest shock to himself or causing a scratch to the machine.

The wind upon the occasion of this trial, the most successful thus far, but insignificant when compared to what can and will be accomplished in the very near future, was blowing squarely from the east at the rate of about fourteen miles an hour. A start was made from the summit of the hill, not fifteen feet from the porte cochere of Mr. Bunnell's residence. For twenty yards, perhaps, the hill descends at an angle of about 32 degrees. Then for another twenty yards the decline is scarcely perceptible. Here again is reached another sharp descent, not quite so abrupt nor yet so long as the first. After this there is a gentle slope for nearly a quarter of a mile before the level below is reached. The big declines near the summit of the hill resemble somewhat a couple of gigantic steps.

Mr. Bodine adjusted the machine to his arms, and taking a position as near to the house as possible, made a run for the edge of the hill or the first of the two big steps above referred to. Reaching it, he jumped in the air about three feet. The wind caught the wings, and in a half a second more the gigantic gull-like arrangement was fairly on its journey, sailing as gracefully as a hawk, and carrying its single passenger with as little effort as a robin flies to its nest with a worm in its bill.

The great, white, artificial bird had soared perhaps fifty feet, all this time remaining on a dead level with the starting point at the top of the hill. Then came an experience new to Mr. Bodine, but old to the veteran Lilienthal. The machine came to an absolute stop. It would neither advance nor descend nor return. It was motionless. Perhaps for five seconds it remained in this position; then, as if it had suddenly changed its mind and gotten over its fit of sulks, it started forward at a rattling pace, dipping gracefully first to one side and then to the other, and keeping the operator busy by his efforts to retain the centre of equilibrium and thus prevent the machine from lurching too much and possibly spilling its cargo of humanity to the ground below and finishing the journey all by itself.

When the forty-five-yard mark had been reached the machine had settled only about four feet below the top of the hill, and was fully twenty-five feet above the ground. Here new difficulties were encountered. The wind began to blow in puffs, one puff coming from three or four points south of east, and an instant later another puff coming from as many or more points north of east. The machine responded to each puff just as suddenly as a weather vane on a well-greased pivot would. As a matter of fact, the steering apparatus makes a weather vane out of the whole machine. The rudder is a vertical affair, and is shaped not unlike a mammoth palm leaf fan. It acts as a rein in always keeping the head of the machine in the wind.

With a less experienced operator in the machine than Mr. Bodine the flight would have probably terminated when these puffs were first encountered. The machine swiftly shot one way and then as swiftly another. Any one who has watched a weather vane shift in response to each change of the wind may form some idea of the effect of the erratic breezes upon the flying apparatus. Mr. Bodine, however, was equal to the emergency, and though the wind changes were sudden, he as suddenly found the centre of equilibrium and retained it.

A SAFE AND PLEASANT DESCENT.

From here on it was plain sailing. The wind ceased to be cranky, and the machine glided on toward the foot of the hill without again changing its course. It settled gradually to earth, and a safe landing was effected. Mr. Bodine stepped from the apparatus unharmed, thus completing the longest and by far the most successful flight ever made with a flying machine in America. One hundred and twenty-five yards is the record for the present, but it will not stand long, for Mr. Bodine expects to eclipse it this or next week, and there is no good reason why his expectations should not be realized.

Just before the successful flight here described another test was made. The distance flown was only about sixty yards, but an altitude of nearly thirty feet above the starting point was reached, by many feet the greatest height yet attained.

The start was made, as usual, from the top of the hill. The operator launched himself as in all previous trials, but, contrary to expectations, the machine, instead of soaring away, shot straight up in the air to a height of thirty feet. The rapidity with which the move was made almost deprived Mr. Bodine of his wind and senses, but he quickly recovered both, and finding the centre of balance put a stop to the dangerous wobbling of the apparatus, and, putting it on its true course, started to descend.

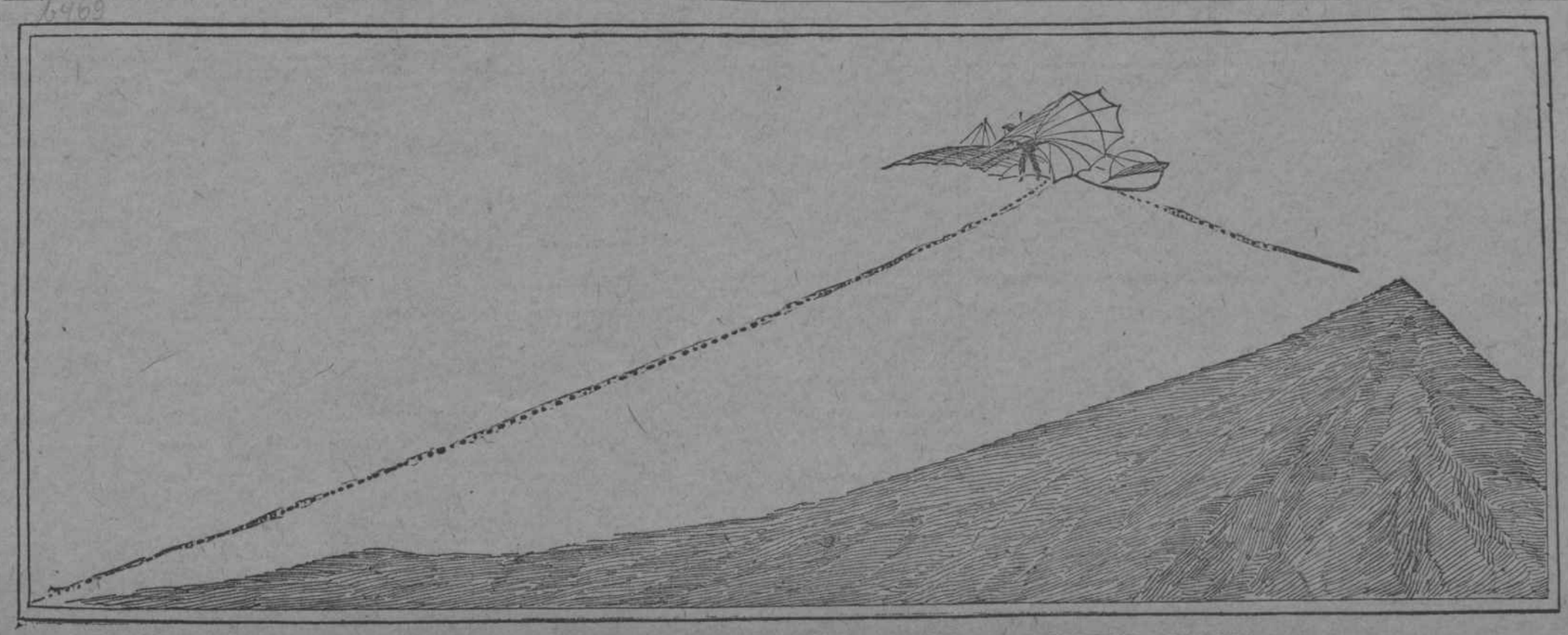
When he reached a point over the end of the first steep declivity he was fully fifty-two feet above the ground. The height was a dizzy one and the situation calculated to affect the nervous system of a man more experienced in aerial navigation than the operator. Mr. Bodine was not familiar with the navigation at such a lofty altitude, and he made haste to get nearer the earth. He reached the latter after having sailed sixty yards. Had he felt a trifle surer of himself there is little doubt, considering how far he was above the ground, that he could have equalled and perhaps beaten Lilienthal's best record, which is 300 yards.

A FASCINATING PASTIME.

Mr. Bodine, who has indulged in all sorts of athletic sports, and who is an athlete himself, still adheres to the opinion he first rendered—that flying is the most fascinating pastime that could possibly be found, and he believes that all who try it will arrive at the same conclusion.

The Journal has been flooded with suggestions from flying machine enthusiasts in various parts of the country. Dozens of people stand ready, so their letters say, at least, to attach a simple contrivance to the Lilienthal apparatus that will make it possible to knock into a cocked hat all of the soaring feats thus far accomplished. They can make the machine not only soar, but fly hundreds of miles at a stretch. One gentleman, for a certain consideration, proposes to navigate the machine to London in three hours and a few odd minutes.

Lilienthal is now at work upon a motor of which he expects much. When it is completed and attached to his machine he thinks he will come close to the solution of the problem of continued flight.



A 400-FOOT FLIGHT---THE BEST RECORD YET.

BEES IN A NEW LINE.

The Latest Usage to Which They Have Been Put Is the Manufacture of Medicated Honey.

The busy little bee has been forced into a new business, that of the manufacture of medicated honey, in a variety of flavors, for as many kinds of diseases. It is a "French scientist," of course, that has brought about this valuable addition to the pharmacopeia. He keeps the bees in a large conservatory, or at any rate under glass, so that they can only pasture upon flowers specially provided and chosen for special medicinal properties. In this manner ready made physic of the most delicious kind is garnered. In this way influenza, coughs and colds, indigestion, asthma and many other ills are said to be readily if indirectly reached, and while the palate of the weakened invalid and the stubborn child is tickled, he is being surreptitiously cured.